


Texas Department of Health

The Commissioner's Report to the Board of Health

October 26, 2001

TDH Hot Topics



TDH Bioterrorism Committee.

The TDH Executive Team has approved a coordinated plan to address TDH activities related to bioterrorism. A major component of the plan is the reactivation of the TDH Bioterrorism Work Group. Dr. Dennis Perrotta, State Epidemiologist, will serve as chair of the work group, and Francesca Kupper will serve as project manager. The team includes designated staff from EMS, the Health Alert Network, Emergency Preparedness, Laboratory, IDEAS, Office of Governmental Relations, Office of Communications, Zoonosis, Radiation Control, Administration, and Office of General Counsel. The first meeting of the group was held this week.



Bioterrorism.

During the last two weeks, TDH staff members have answered hundreds of calls from news media representatives, physicians, medical organizations and individual citizens on the threat of bioterrorism and preventive measures in place in Texas. State Epidemiologist Dennis Perrotta spoke to about 30 members of the news media and provided dozen on-camera interviews including information on the Health Alert Network. Julie Rawlings in IDEAS and Linda Linville in Immunizations also responded to callers. Office of Communications issued a news feature and a radio news feed on bioterrorism issues including answers to the most frequently asked questions. These are posted on the TDH web site. *For more information contact, Marsha Canright, Office of Communications, (512) 458-7400 or e-mail marsha.canright@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Terrorist-Related General Sanitation Activities.

The General Sanitation Division was contacted by the FBI on September 26, 2001, and asked to advise organized mosquito control districts, pesticide suppliers, pesticide distributors, regional offices, and associations to be on the alert and report suspicious activity to them. The FBI requested that mosquito control equipment be inventoried and security of equipment and chemicals increased. *For more information, contact Roy Burton, General Sanitation Division – Vector Control Branch, (512) 834-6635 or e-mail roy.burton@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Emergency Medical Service.

Rod Dennison, Region 7 EMS Director, is a member of the Texas Task Force-1 Search and Rescue Team, which was deployed to New York City by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after the collapse of the World Trade Towers. The team arrived at the Jacob Javitz Center in New York City at 1:30 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 19. They worked twelve-hour shifts recovering bodies from the site. *For more information contact Mike Foegelle, Emergency Medical Service, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2285 or e-mail mike.foegelle@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Other Hot Topics



Emergency Order.

The Texas Department of Health (department) has closed down a San Antonio manufactured food establishment that makes tortillas, chips and masa because of unsafe food processing conditions. On October 4, 2001, Charles Bell, M.D., signed an emergency order prohibiting the company from operating. The establishment has a noncompliance history, and investigations showed serious violations related to pest infestation (rodent activity), building and outside openings in poor repair, outside waste storage area observed with uncovered food waste receptacles, inadequate plumbing and equipment not being cleaned. The establishment had failed to take any corrective action, and the license has expired. *For more information contact Derek Jakovich, J.D., M.B.A., M.H.A., Director, Licensing and Enforcement Division, Bureau of Food and Drug Safety, (512) 719-0222 or e-mail Derek.Jakovich@tdh.state.tx.us.*



All Systems Go for HR/Financial.

The Health and Human Services Administrative System (HHSAS) Phase I Financials have been implemented. The HHSAS project went live on September 4. Staff is able to conduct business and all systems are functioning as designed. As of September 10, HHSAS had processed transactions in excess of \$296,000,000. The HHSAS helpdesk is available to staff from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Human Resource Management Systems Enterprise Work Group sessions have been completed. The solutions to the gaps in the system are being taken to the Change Control Board for approval. *For more information contact Linda Schirpik, Administrative Systems Project, (512) 458-7503 or e-mail linda.schirpik@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Recalled Dried Beef.

Approximately 300 pounds of ready-to eat dried beef (carne seca) was recalled by the manufacturer after a sample collected by a Meat Safety Assurance (MSA) inspector tested positive for *Salmonella*. Operations at the plant were suspended temporarily until the plant identified the cause of the contamination and implemented corrective and preventive measures designed to prevent future occurrence. *For more information, contact Lee Jan, D.V.M., Director, Meat Safety Assurance Division, (512) 719-0205 or e-mail lee.jan@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Disease Outbreaks



Eight Cases of Perinatal Hepatitis B reported as of September 19.

There have been eight cases in which hepatitis B virus was transmitted by hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)-positive women to their infants. These cases have been reported from Harris and Dallas County. Nine of the cases are of Asian descent and one is black, non-Hispanic. The appropriate prophylaxis for children born to HBsAg-positive mothers is to receive hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) and the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth and to complete the hepatitis B vaccine series by six months of age. Five of the infants received appropriate prophylaxis. The remaining three infants completed the vaccine series, but did not receive HBIG. However, the vaccine series was not initiated until two months of age in one of these infants. *For more information contact Rita Espinoza, Immunization Division, Surveillance and Epidemiology Program, (512) 458-7284, or e-mail rita.espinoza@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Botulism outbreak follow-up.

TDH central office and regional staff are continuing to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to investigate the outbreak of foodborne botulism that occurred in late August and early September in the DFW area. To date there have been 6 confirmed cases, with 2 pending, and others only mildly affected. Preliminary findings indicate that frozen chili containing toxin was confined to a single distributor and that the presence of the toxin was caused by improper handling of the food. TDH conducted the foodborne outbreak investigation to determine the likely contaminated foods, tested suspect foods and patient specimens for botulinum toxin and *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria, assisted the treating physicians with anti-toxin deliveries, assisted the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) with the food product traceback and recall activities, and responded to news media questions and public concerns. Central office and regional staff from Region 2/3 staff were involved in the investigation. TDH issued a recall on one brand of frozen chili, and on any frozen chili purchased at a specific salvage grocery store in Fort Worth. *For more information contact Brad Walsh, Regional Epidemiologist, (817) 264-4551 or e-mail brad.walsh@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Media Campaign



“Worth It” Campaign.

An updated media campaign educating youth, law enforcement officials and judicial officers about current Texas youth tobacco laws is running now in Amarillo, Lubbock, Del Rio, San Angelo and Midland/Odessa. The Campaign entitled “Worth It” questions whether tobacco use is worth it, given some of the penalties for Texas youth (loss of driver’s license, fines, etc.) under Texas law. The campaign includes TV, radio, billboard, promo items (magnets, stickers, t-shirts, etc.) and posters. *For more information contact Diana Satterwhite-Condon, Office of Tobacco Prevention and Control, (512) 458-7402 or e-mail diana.satterwhite@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Key Reports



Sprint E/Solutions audit finds registry secure.

The current security system and business practices for the TDH immunizations registry provides a high level of protection of the confidential data it contains, according to a security audit by Sprint E/Solutions completed in August. Requested by TDH, the audit only detected a few vulnerabilities. Four areas of the system were examined and tested: web-based application, client/server application (dial-up/modem access), end-user access, and general TDH employee access. The vulnerabilities exposed as a result of the internal testing, found that system penetration was possible employee level system access. The company was not successful in penetrating the system outside of TDH via the web application or end-user access. Staff is reviewing the report and analyzing the remediation recommendations for implementation of measures to eliminate or reduce the system vulnerabilities and risks. A summary of the report findings, recommendations, and action steps to address remediation will be provided to senior management by November 1. The cooperation and assistance of TDH Internal Audit Division, TDH Information Systems Associateship, and the Texas Department of Information Resources were greatly appreciated. *For more information contact Pat Feagin, Immunization Division, ImmTrac Program, (512) 458-7284 or e-mail pat.feagin@tdh.state.tx.us.*



General Accounting Office (GAO) report. A newly published GAO report concludes that state, local and federal agencies are not making health fraud of seniors a priority. Entitled *Health Products for Seniors: Anti-Aging Products Pose Potential for Physical and Economic Harm*, the report examines whether or not products targeted at seniors are truly resulting in harm to that population. Personnel from the DMDD were interviewed by GAO researchers and provided material relevant to the topic such as adverse event report statistics, examples of advertising and labeling, and enforcement actions. *For more information, contact Karen Tannert, Drugs and Medical Devices Division, (512) 719-0237 ext. 496 or e-mail karen.tannert@tdh.state.tx.us.*

TDH Programs Update



TDH Shipment Received.

The Nuevo Leon State Lab in Monterrey Mexico reported that they successfully received a TDH shipment of pharmaceuticals including Middlebrook Concentrate and Isoniazid, Rifampin, Ethambutol, and Streptomycin. The earlier problem with Mexican Federal import permits appears to have been resolved. *For more information contact Ken Jost, Microbiological Services Division, (512) 458-7580 or e-mail ken.jost@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Processing Newborn Specimens.

On August 23 the Newborn Screening laboratory began processing newborn specimens using the upgraded Perkin Elmer technology. Perkin Elmer and TDH staff continues to address instrumentation and software problems. Results continue to go out on schedule with the use of compensatory time. *For more information contact Eldridge T. Hutcheson, Director, Biochemistry and Genetics Division, (512) 458-7430 or e-mail eldridge.hutcheson@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Indoor Air Quality Workshop. On August 2-3 the Bureau cosponsored an indoor air quality workshop, "Assessing Mold and Bacterial Contamination of Indoor Environments," with the MidAtlantic Environmental Hygiene Resource Center in Philadelphia. MidAtlantic supplied the speakers who discussed assessment of microbial contamination and damage due to contamination in dwellings and commercial buildings. Participants heard recommendations on effective ways to control, prevent and remediate contamination problems as well as cautions about unsuccessful control measures which have been promoted either unwittingly or unscrupulously in recent years. States represented by the 152 attendees included Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, California, Pennsylvania, Washington and Texas. *For more information contact Dr. Jim Harris, Microbiological Services Division, (512) 458-7566 or e-mail jim.harris@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Anisakid Worms.

A fish specimen from Brackenridge Hospital was identified as containing six Anisakid worms; the patient spotted the actively moving worms while eating her uncooked fish dinner. These parasites of saltwater fishes can cause health problems (anisakiasis) if ingested, including nausea and vomiting. The larval worms can burrow into the stomach, migrating to the oropharynx, causing cough; sometimes they will perforate the bowel. *For more information contact Paul Fournier, Microbiological Services Division, (512) 458-7605 or e-mail paul.fournier@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Diabetes Clinical Algorithms.

The Texas Diabetes Council approved four new and updated clinical algorithms for clinicians treating diabetes patients. The topics are: Pharmacologic Algorithm for Type 2 Diabetes in Adults; Medical Nutrition Algorithm for Impaired Fasting Glucose

IFG)/Type 2 Diabetes Prevention and Therapy; Hypertension Algorithm for Diabetes Mellitus in Adults; and Exercise Algorithm for IFG/Type 2 Diabetes Prevention & Therapy. Dissemination to Texas clinicians is beginning immediately. *For more information contact Jan Ozias, Texas Diabetes Council/Program, (512) 458-7490 or e-mail jan.ozias@tdh.state.tx.us.*



“Put Prevention Into Practice.”

The Federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has completed a “Put Prevention into Practice” implementation guide that is based upon materials developed by the TDH program. National dissemination of the guide will begin in the next few months. *For more information contact Phil Huang, Bureau of Chronic Disease & Tobacco Prevention, (512) 458-7200 or e-mail philip.huang@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Cancer in Texas 1997 – Incidence Report.

The Texas Cancer Registry Division of the TDH publishes an annual report on cancer incidence among Texas residents. The current report includes cancer incidence data for 1997, the most recent year of complete statewide cancer information. Summary cancer data are presented in this report by sex, age, and race/ethnicity. Approximately 550 copies of this report will be mailed to public health professionals, health care facilities, and researchers. The printed report is available upon request, as well as an electronic version at <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/tcr/default.html>. *For more information contact Dr. Melanie Williams, (512) 458-7523 or e-mail melanie.williams@tdh.state.tx.us.*

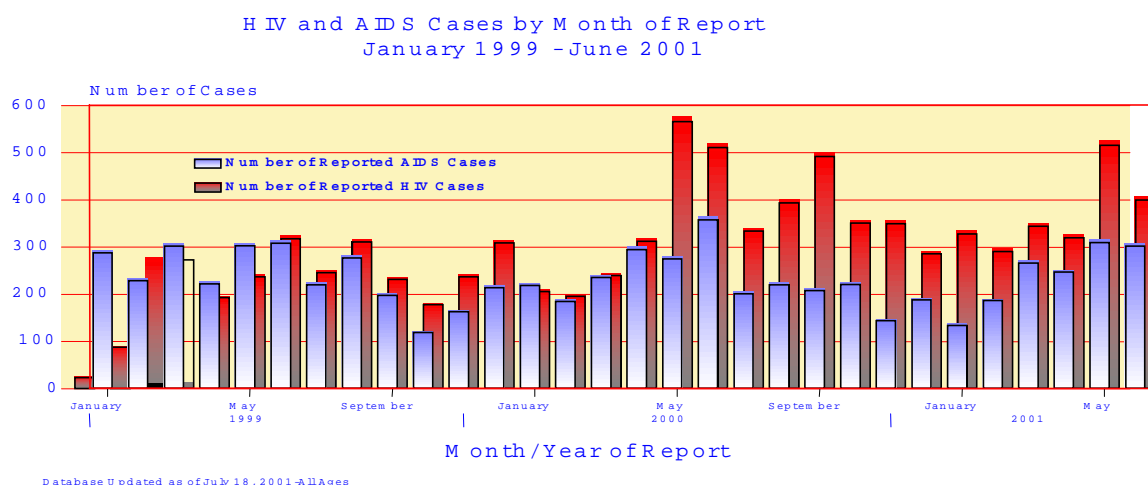


Texas Folic Acid Council.

The Texas Folic Acid Council (TFAC) is represented by multiple TDH programs as well as community and non-profit groups, and is dedicated to increasing awareness of the benefits of folic acid in preventing birth defects, and increasing the intake of folic acid among Texas women. Throughout August and September, TFAC distributed 20,000 folic acid “starter kits” through WIC clinics in selected areas. *For more information contact Amy Case, Texas Birth Defects Monitoring Division, (512) 458-7232 or e-mail amy.case@tdh.state.tx.us.*

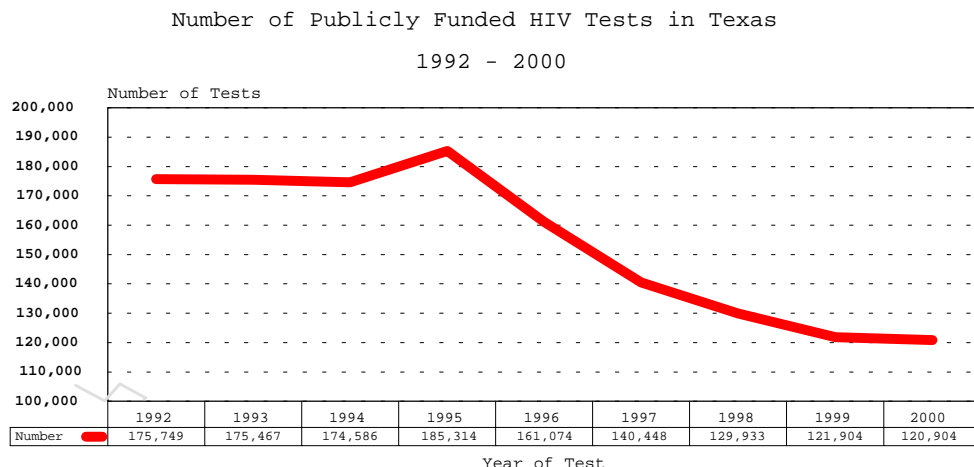


Evaluation of Confidential HIV/AIDS Reporting by Name.



Confidential HIV reporting by name for adults and adolescents was implemented on January 1, 1999. Viral load reporting began on January 1, 2000. Reported AIDS cases have remained more or less steady since that time, but HIV (not AIDS) reports have risen considerably since the first of 2000. Thus far, a total of 9,945 HIV (not AIDS) infections

among people age 13 and older have been reported under the new system. Of these, 934 have since progressed to AIDS.



Staff of the HIV/STD Epidemiology Division obtained data to report on progress on the objective in the HIV/AIDS Surveillance Grant application directed at determining the impact of HIV reporting by name upon Texas residents' willingness to get tested for HIV infection. When TDH proposed the rule change to institute confidential HIV reporting for adults and adolescents, many in the community feared that such a system would discourage people from accessing HIV testing. However, although the numbers of tests done at publicly funded testing sites did go down slightly in 1999 and then in 2000, the trajectory merely followed a long-term trend that was apparent long before the implementation of confidential HIV reporting. Indeed the rate of downward change in numbers appears to be flattening in the years following the January 1, 1999, implementation of confidential HIV reporting. Additionally, in 1999, 83.5 percent of all publicly funded HIV tests were confidential tests, and 16.5 percent were done anonymously. In 2000, the percentage testing confidentially rose to 86.2 percent, and the percentage testing anonymously fell to 13.8 percent. Thus, a large movement to anonymous testing, due to HIV reporting by name, as some feared prior to the rule change, did not occur. Instead the steady trend towards confidential testing continued unabated. *For more information contact Sharon K. Melville, Director, HIV/STD Epidemiology Division, (512) 490-2545 or e-mail sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Professional Examinations Administered.

During August and September, Professional Licensure and Certification Division offered professional examinations to 1,371 individuals. Programs testing were Massage Therapy, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Midwifery. Examinations were given to insure minimum competency as a means of protecting public health. A new examination has been developed for the regulation of registered sanitarians, through the input of content experts in the field of water and wastewater technology, food services, and epidemiology. The first administration of the examination was to 17 candidates on October 5, 2001, in Austin, Texas. During August and September, Professional Licensure and Certification Division offered professional examinations to 1,371 individuals. Programs testing were Massage Therapy, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Midwifery. Examinations were given to insure minimum competency as a means of protecting public health. *For more information contact Jim Zukowski, Ed.D., Division of Professional Licensing at (512) 834-6628 or email jim.zukowski@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Binational Health Conference.

On September 6-7 staff from the TB Elimination Division attended the Los Dos Laredos Binational Health Conference in Laredo. The conference addressed TB issues as well as other health topics. *For more information contact Charles Wallace, TB Elimination Division, (512) 458-7447 or e-mail charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Health-Related Pest Control Activities.

The General Sanitation Division is working with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service to revise the training manual used by individuals interested in being licensed by TDH as noncommercial pesticide applicators involved in health-related pest control. This is the first revision since the mid-1980s and should have a positive impact statewide. *For more information, contact Roy Burton, General Sanitation Division – Vector Control Branch, (512) 834-6635 or e-mail roy.burton@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Toxic Substances Control Division Participates in Border Workshops for Hazardous Substances.

Staff of the Toxic Substances Control Division and Public Health Regions 9/10 and 11 are participating in a series of workshops that provide outreach to hazardous substance haulers, transporters, shippers, customs brokers, warehouse operators, freight forwarders, and maquilas near the Texas/Mexico Border. The workshops will have English/Spanish translation services and are being provided at no cost to attendees. The seminars are coordinated by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, with presentations by the Texas Department of Health, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission, the Texas Department of Insurance, Local Emergency Planning Committees, U.S. Customs, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as several Mexican governmental agencies and fire departments. The workshops are scheduled as follows: Brownsville, October 1-2; McAllen, October 3-4; Laredo, October 10-11; and El Paso, October 25-26. *For more information contact Brandon Harper, Hazard Communication Branch, (512) 834-6603, ext. 2426 or e-mail brandon.Harper@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Food Safety Education Month 2001.

More than 80,000 coloring books; 50,000 refrigerator thermometers; and an abundance of brochures, four-pack Crayola crayons, balloons, pencils and lunch box gel packs helped tell the story of food safety this year. With permission from Universal Studios, the Chilly Willy penguin appeared on the food safety coloring books offering the message: "Be cool, chill out. Refrigerate promptly." Regional office staff each conducted at least five safety presentations; Albertson's and H.E.B grocery stores offered calendars to customers; and the Texas Beef Council provided refrigerator thermometers at local fairs and expositions. The TDH Office of Communications staff provided an Accent on Health feature, a radio Public Service Announcement, and a message on hold. Along with media distribution, the Accent on Health feature was sent to corporations for distribution through electronic bulletin boards. Other highlights of the annual safety campaign included a Board of Health Resolution and governor's proclamation recognizing September as Food Safety Education Month. With the support of the Texas Health Foundation, items were purchased in bulk, minimizing costs and logistics. Through the work of all partners, more than 2,000,000 Texans heard about the importance of food safety. *For more information contact Joel Ortiz, Retail Foods Division, (512) 719-0232, ext. 457 or e-mail joel.ortiz@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Hotline Information



American Cancer Society Telephone Quitline.

The American Cancer Society Telephone Quitline was selected through a competitive process to provide telephone counseling regarding tobacco use cessation to Texans in the pilot areas of the state. The Quitline utilizes a toll-free number (1-800-YES QUIT) with bilingual operators and counselors that can provide information and state-of-the-art cessation counseling for those that are ready to quit. *For more information contact Diana Satterwhite-Condon, Office of Tobacco Prevention and Control, (512) 458-7402 or e-mail diana.satterwhite@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C staff have been working on getting the hepatitis helpline (1-866-4HEPABC) listed in health resource directories and health-related Internet sites. The staff also ordered 1,000 new prevention posters to prepare to mail to contractors, regional offices, local health departments and advocacy group statewide. *For more information contact Gary Heseltine, Staff Epidemiologist, Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Surveillance Division, (512) 458-7676 or e-mail gary.heseltine@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Administrative Update



Lab Building Project.

Brickwork is complete. Wall framing is complete through five floors, and 80% complete on sixth floor. Sheetrock tape and float is complete for the first two floors and is ready for paint. Telephone/data cabling is complete through four floors. Exterior overhead and sliding doors are scheduled for delivery on September 6, and installed 30 days later. Then, the building can be secured. HVAC will be running 24 hours a day to cure interior finishes. *For more information contact Tim Horn, Lab Office/Building Project, (512) 458-7780 or e-mail tim.horn@tdh.state.tx.us.*



HUBs. TDH will co-sponsor, along with the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, a buyer bus-hop in Austin on October 4. One of the requirements of the state HUB laws is that agencies make an effort to have agency purchase decision makers meet face-to-face with HUBs. The bus-hop that we are co-sponsoring with the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will bring TDH (10 registered so far) purchasers and pro-card holders to the places of business of the participating HUBs and HUB qualified businesses. We have approximately 21 people registered including people from other agencies. We feel this will increase the HUB qualified businesses we visit chances of completing the certification process to become HUBs. As of August 2001, the TDH adjusted HUB usage is approximately by 11.24%. *For more information contact Al Beavers, HUB Office, (512) 458-7111, ext. 3760 or e-mail al.beavers@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Regional Update

Public Health Region 2/3



Manufactured Foods Division.

In 1996, the partnership for Food Safety Education consisting of industry, government, and consumer groups was formed to recognize September as National Food Safety and Education Month. Once again, Public Health Region 7's Manufactured Foods Division has joined the coalition. We will present the 2001 campaign "Be cool, chill out" to a nearby rural school. Our goal is to educate young Americans on Safe Food Handling Practices. *For more information contact Elena Gamble, Manufactured Foods, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2710 or e-mail elena.gamble@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Health-Related Pesticide Applicator Licensing.

Representative Tom Uher of Bay City, contacted TDH concerning the licensing of Matagorda County employees who do health-related mosquito control. Region 6/5 South employees of the General Sanitation Division arranged a training program attended by eleven governmentally employed individuals in Matagorda County. After the training program, the attendees were tested on their knowledge of federal and state laws, federal and department rules, health and safety issues related to pesticide application, and vector control. Region 6/5 South has plans to provide similar training for Liberty, Hardin, and Montgomery Counties. *For more information contact Roy Burton, General Sanitation Division–Vector Control Branch, (512) 834-6635 or e-mail roy.burton@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Public Health Region 2/3



Zoonotic Disease Presentation.

Zoonosis Control provided a Zoonotic Disease presentation to the Association of Professional Infectious Disease Control Nurses in Dallas with 150 people attending. *For more information contact Connie Lindley, PHR 2 & 3, Zoonosis Control, (817) 264-4921, or e-mail connie.lindley@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Four Media Contacts.

Zoonosis Control has had four media contacts covering the topics of West Nile Virus and Rabies in our Region. Due to recent articles on West Nile Virus, Zoonosis Control has had 32 calls reporting dead birds in the metroplex. Some of these birds have been submitted for testing. *For more information contact Connie Lindley, PHR 2 & 3, Zoonosis Control, (817) 264-4921, or e-mail connie.lindley@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Reported Cases of Skunk Rabies.

Zoonosis Control has received 7 reported cases of skunk rabies and 4 reported cases of bat rabies in our Region during the month of September. Tarrant County has the highest number of reported rabies cases in our Region (and the state) for this year, 2001, with a total of 82 rabies-infected animals. There were 77 rabies-infected skunks, 1 rabies infected dog (infected with the skunk strain of rabies), and 4 rabies-infected bats disclosed this year in Tarrant County. *For more information contact Connie Lindley, PHR 2 & 3, Zoonosis Control, (817) 264-4921, or e-mail connie.lindley@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Public Health Region 6/5 South



Community Planning Forum.

Several Region 6/5 South staff members participated in the Region 6 Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Community Planning Forum held on August 29 in Houston. The United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast hosted the forum. Representatives from various state and local agencies and community-based organizations attended the event. Participants learned about the services offered by the agencies of HHSC and worked together to identify and recommend solutions to health issues affecting the region. *For more information contact Brian Rutherford, Regional Customer Service Representative, (713) 767-3010 or e-mail brian.rutherford@tdh.state.tx.us.*



LHA Conference Call.

On September 17 Deputy Regional Director, and Regional Customer Service Representative, facilitated a conference call for Local Health Authorities (LHAs) in the region. The conference call was in conjunction with the initiative being lead by the Local Health Authority Blueprint Project Committee to define the roles and responsibilities of LHAs and develop curricula to support those functions. Five LHAs participated in the call where they identified obstacles in carrying out their duties, suggested resources that might help them do their jobs more effectively, discussed their roles and duties and oath of office issues, and listed what they considered to be the top priorities for LHAs in the region. *For more information contact Brian Rutherford, Regional Customer Service Representative, (713) 767-3010 or e-mail brian.rutherford@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Public Health Region 7



Tuberculosis Control Program.

The Public Health Nurses of PHR 7 have recently completed training for “Tuberculosis Nurse Case Management” at the Texas Center for Infectious Diseases Training Center in San Antonio. The course was provided by TB Education Center, Bureau of Communicable Disease Control, and TDH and with the support of Region 7. The local and state health departments have the major responsibility for the prevention and control of TB in their communities. The public health nurses will be able to competently manage TB patients, link with the physicians and partner with community care providers to effectively conduct targeted screening activities in identified high risk populations of the community. *For more information contact Dana Schoepf, TB Control Program Manager, (254) 778-6744 or e-mail dana.schoepf@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Medical Transportation.

Medical Transportation is currently involved in network meeting to make sure that all programs as well as physicians are aware of the types of services Medical Transportation is providing. We are also involved in Health Fair to better educate the public on types of services Medical Transportation has to offer. This year we have started extended hours services and Saturday services for Dental and Medical appointments. *For more information contact Jimmy Lara, Medical Transportation, (254) 778-6744, ext 2850 or e-mail jimmy.lara@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Copperas Cove Shot Clinic.

The community wide shot clinic was held on Saturday, August 18. The Copperas Cove Fire Department partnered with Copperas Cove School nurses, The Refuge Corporation and Region 7 to protect the children in their community from vaccine preventable diseases. In January 2000, the Refuge Corporation introduced the Shots Across Texas Firehouse Project to the Copperas Cove Fire Department (CCFD). The fire department staff was excited about the idea and was eager to make it an annual event. It was a tremendous success then and an even bigger success this year. This collaborative effort resulted in over 200 children being immunized.

In less than one year’s time, the CCFD has administered over one thousand doses of vaccine. The “one-thousandth” shot was administered during Saturday’s clinic. The lucky young child was presented with a T-shirt and a personal tour of a new fire truck. Many activities were offered during this special event for the children including a rock climbing wall, a moon-walk, balloons, clowns and snacks. CCFD contributed to the success of the

event by offering “Kid Cards,” a service that provides personal identification cards to children. The CCFD offers free immunizations through the Texas Vaccine for Children Program the first and third Saturday of each month. *For more information contact Yolanda Boaz, Communicable Diseases, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2424 or e-mail yolanda.boaz@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Nutrition Services and Cardiovascular Health Programs.

Bryan Independent School District (ISD) trained over fifty staff from 16 elementary schools on the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) program and subsequently implemented the CATCH curriculum across the district. This was accomplished through a collaborative effort by TDH-Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition Services programs, Brazos County Health District, and University of Texas. The training used for Bryan ISD was unique because the cafeteria managers, physical education specialists, and classroom teachers were cross-trained in all components of CATCH. As a result of the training and implementation, Bryan ISD is being used as a model for other school districts. *For more information contact Joan Atkinson, Nutrition Services, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2335 or e-mail joan.atkinson@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Program Teamwork.

Staff from the Communicable Disease Program, Zoonosis and Public Health Nursing was able to quickly activate the response system to address a communicable disease exposure that was reported from another state health department. This exposure involved several members of a family, including children, who had been visiting relatives in another state and had already left to drive home to Texas when one of the relatives that they visited was hospitalized for meningitis. Zoonosis first received the report, and communicable disease staff, public health nursing, and a regional staff member who interpreted for the Spanish speaking family were able track the arrival of the family back to Texas, notify them, and coordinate treatment arrangements for all of the family. This type of teamwork is just one example of TDH program’s staff ability to use a team approach to quickly and efficiently respond to public health issues. *For more information contact Pat Collins, Public Health Nursing, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2105 or e-mail pat.collins@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Medicaid Managed Care.

Three Public Hearings for the anticipated rollout of the Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) model of Medicaid Managed Care were held in Region 7. The hearings were held in Waco, Belton, and Bryan. Approximately 30 to 40 members of the community attended. Those attending included Local Health Departments, Hospital Administrators, Medicaid Providers, Local Clinics, School Districts, Local State Agency Offices, Rural Community Health Systems and Consumer Advocacy Organizations. Issues of concern were: client education of the system, ability to utilize providers across county lines, the ability of the Rural Community Health System to provide an alternative to the Medicaid Managed Care PCCM model, coverage in the rural areas for 24/7 access, hospital reimbursement, and referral patterns and reimbursement. Summaries of the Public Hearings and a Question and Answer section will be posted on the Health and Human Services Commission website, www.hhsc.state.tx.us. *For more information contact Jackie McLaughlin, Medicaid Managed Care Coordinator, (254) 778.6744, ext 2804 or e-mail jackie.mclaughlin@tdh.state.tx.us*



Texas Health Steps (THS) Provider Relations.

Since it is hard for any provider, especially rural providers to attend trainings, the THS provider relation’s staff in Region 7 has taken training to the providers. Staff members of the Seton Edgar B. Davis Hospital in Luling and the Seton Lockhart Clinic were trained in THS and other Medicaid services for women and children. The audience ranged from

office managers, to nurses, to physician assistants. Over thirty medical students in their residency program at Texas A&M in College Station were also educated. *For more information contact Eileen Walker, Social Work Services, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2415 or e-mail eileen.walker@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Family Support Services (FSS).

The new Family Support Services of CSHCN in Region 7 has made a significant difference in the life and safety of yet another child with an unusual request. At the family's request, vinyl window panes to replace their glass ones were purchased and installed in their home. Their son who is legally blind and cognitively delayed was attracted to light coming through the family's glass windows and would bang his head on the window in response to the light. His mother explained that they had been afraid to leave the room because he might break the window possibly causing serious injury to him or his baby sister if she was around. The security and safety this family now has because of the FSS component of CSHCN cost only \$478.80. *For more information contact Leslie Anderson, Social Work Services, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2320 or e-mail leslie.anderson@tdh.state.tx.us.*



HIV/STD Partner Services Workshop.

A workshop for Region 7 HIV/STD prevention contractors was held in August. The purpose of the workshop was to improve partner services. TDH, Region 7 HIV/STD contractors reviewed their performance and attempted to identify problems contributing to shortfalls. After a day of exchanging ideas and sharing possible solutions, each participant returned to their agency to develop individualized work plans. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) regarding partner elicitation and notification activities between Region 7 and contractors were reviewed. Participants will meet again following next quarter to assess progress toward objectives and to discuss MOU revisions. *For more information contact Jennifer Schneider, HIV/STD Program, (254) 778-6744 or e-mail jennifer.schneider@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Blood-Born Pathogen Exposure Plan.

Region 7 representatives from HIV/STD, Public Health Nursing, Emergency Medical Services, and the Immunizations Program collaborated to develop a blood-born pathogen exposure plan for employees. An orientation was provided for Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) and others at risk of exposure. The training will become a part of Region 7 HIV/STD new employee orientation. *For more information contact Jennifer Schneider, HIV/STD Program, (254) 778-6744 or e-mail jennifer.schneider@tdh.state.tx.us.*



“Building a Tobacco-Free Community: Tools for Now, the Future...for Everyone” Conference.

Dr. Jeffrey Wigand, a former tobacco industry executive/scientist whose life was chronicled in the movie, “*The Insider*,” was the keynote speaker at the regional tobacco conference that was held at the Waco Convention Center on August 30. Over 200 participants learned about the current information on tobacco prevention and control with the introduction of practical tools to build tobacco-free communities. Those in attendance were youth, nurses, school educators, social workers, dental professionals, drug and alcohol counselors, and law enforcement. The conference had a special youth track designed especially for youth with little or no experience in tobacco prevention and control activities. Almost half of those attending were youth. The desired outcome was for the participants to return to their communities and schools and become a vehicle of change. Several participants signed up for next training, “Communities of Excellence in Tobacco

Control scheduled for October 23. *For more information contact Sylvia Barron, Tobacco Prevention, (254) 778-6744, ext. 2350 or e-mail sylvia.barron@tdh.state.tx.us.*



S.A.F.E. and KTAK.

Currently there are two Coalitions in Waco working on Tobacco Prevention Activities: Safe Air for Everyone (S.A.F.E.) and Keep Tobacco Away from Kids (KTAK). S.A.F.E. Coalition is working towards a smoke-free ordinance in Waco with a desire to have all of McLennan County follow suit. KTAK trains PALS (Peer Assistance Leadership) students in high schools in McLennan County to do peer education with all fourth grade students in their areas. *For more information contact Sylvia Barron, Tobacco Prevention, at (254) 778-6744 ext. 2350 or e-mail sylvia.barron@tdh.state.tx.us.*



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Final Policy Memorandum.

The final policy memorandum WIC-2001-7, Immunization Screening and Referral in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, was issued August 30. The memo addresses the minimum requirements for immunization screening and referral in the WIC Program as specified by Executive Memorandum of December 11 which directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to continue to focus on efforts to increase immunization levels among children participating in the WIC Program. The memo discusses WIC's role in screening and referral; minimum protocol requirements for WIC screening and referral; coordination with state Immunization Programs; and the development of training by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for WIC staff. Implementation is required by October 1, 2002. CDC will issue a "Dear Colleague" letter to Immunization Programs transmitting the USDA memo along with guidance to Immunization Programs on coordination with WIC. *For more information contact Ms. Barbara Keir, Public Health Nutrition and Education Division, (512) 458-7111, ext. 2144 or e-mail barbara.keir@tdh.state.tx.us.*

Public Health Region 11



Disaster Medicine and Disaster Planning Program / Corpus Christi.

Zoonosis Control Veterinarian participated in the Disaster Medicine and Disaster Planning program and workshop during the Texas Veterinary Medical Association's Summer Seminar in Corpus Christi. Participants included private veterinarians, local animal care and control personnel, State veterinary personnel and federal veterinarians. *For more information contact Laura E. Robinson, Zoonosis Control Veterinarian Public Health, (956) 423-0130 or e-mail laura.robinson@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Investigation of a rabid bat / Hidalgo County.

During August, Zoonosis Control personnel investigated a rabid bat from Hidalgo County, a rabid bad from Webb County, a dog bite exposure in Nueces County, and 23 zoonotic disease cases throughout the Region. In addition, Zoonosis Control personnel inspected the rabies quarantine facility in Zapata County and an animal shelter in Nueces County. *For more information contact Laura E. Robinson, Zoonosis Control Veterinarian Public Health, (956) 423-0130 or e-mail laura.robinson@tdh.state.tx.us*



Walk South Texas Day / Harlingen, Texas.

On August 25 the Cardiovascular Health & Wellness, Put Prevention Into Practice and Public Health Promotion organized a walking event in conjunction with the University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Public Health and other organizations. "Walk

South Texas” was held at McKelvey Hike and Bike Trail. Our department offered free screening, blood pressure and diabetes check, body fat analysis, tobacco prevention and physical activity handouts as well as other health information. During this even, we provided free tee shirts, free water, and free door prizes. The door prizes included low fat cooking books, exercise equipment, Sony Walkmans, and bicycle helmets. We had over 700 people participate. State employees from various programs assisted in making this a successful, and fun event. *For more information contact Herb Tolentino, Public Health Promotion Program Manager, (956) 423-0130 or e-mail herb.tolentino@tdh.state.tx.us.*



Environmental Assessments / Hidalgo County. The Office of Border Health and General Sanitation programs conducted environmental assessments for nuisance findings at eight-three colonias in Hidalgo County. Based on our findings these colonias will qualify for nearly six-five million dollars for water and wastewater infrastructure needs and improve the health and safety of approximately 38,343 colonia residents. *For more information contact Ramiro Gonzales, Border Health Program Manager/Environmental Consumer Health Director, (956) 423-0130 or e-mail ramiro.gonzales@tdh.state.tx.us.*